

1/7/2010 WEEK IN REVIEW – FEDERAL COURT

Hammond, Indiana—The United States Attorney's Office announced:

Darrel Newman, 30, of Hammond, Indiana, pled guilty before Senior Judge James Moody to count one of an indictment charging him with being a felon in possession of a firearm. Newman was previously convicted of unlawful use of a firearm in 1998. These charges were filed as the result of an investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives HIDTA Task Force, and the Hammond Police Department. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Nicholas Padilla.

Denny Minix, 22, of Lafayette, Indiana, pled guilty before Judge Joseph Van Bokkelen to count two of an indictment charging him with possession of child pornography. Sentencing has been set for 3/18/11. These charges were filed as the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Evansville Police Department, and the Kokomo Police Department. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jill Trumbull Harris.

Robert Alvelo, Sr., 50, of Chicago, Illinois, was sentenced by Chief Judge Philip Simon to 46 months imprisonment and 4 years of supervised release after pleading guilty to count one of an indictment charging him with conspiracy to distribute five hundred (500) grams or more of cocaine. This case was the result of an investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration HIDTA Task Force. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jacqueline Jacobs.

James Wilkerson, 30, of Lake Station, Indiana, was sentenced by Judge Joseph Van Bokkelen to 77 months imprisonment and 4 years of supervised release after pleading guilty to count of an indictment charging him with drug trafficking (cocaine), and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. This case was the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation GRIT Task Force, and the Lake Station Police Department. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Joshua Kolar and Thomas Ratcliffe.

Branko Nenadic, 27, of Crown Point, Indiana, was sentenced by Senior Judge Rudy Lozano to 15 months imprisonment and 2 years of supervised release, if not deported, after pleading guilty to count one of an indictment charging him with interstate transport of stolen goods. This case was the result of an investigation by the United States Secret Service. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Randall Stewart.

Stanton Cephus, 29, of Hammond, Indiana, was sentenced by Senior Judge Rudy Lozano to 324 months imprisonment. This terms consists of 60 months for count 1s; 120 months for each of counts 7s, 9s, 11s, 13s, 17s, 20s and 21s; and 324 months for each of counts 6s, 8s, 10s, 12s, 14s, 16s and 18s; all of said terms to be served concurrently. Cephus pled guilty to sex trafficking of children, conspiracy to defraud the United States, and transporting for prostitution. This case is the result of an investigation by the Chicago Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, South Resident Agency with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation Merrillville Resident Agency. Also instrumental in the investigation have been the Hammond Police Department, the Cook County Sheriff's Police Vice Unit, the Sauk Village Police Department, and the Steger Police Department. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Jill Trumbull Harris and Philip Benson.

Warren Mills, 34, of Chicago, Illinois, was sentenced by Judge Joseph Van Bokkelen to 21 months imprisonment and 3 years of supervised release after pleading guilty to count one of an indictment charging him with being a felon in possession of a firearm. This case was the result of an investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Nicholas Padilla.

South Bend, IN—The United States Attorney's Office announced:

Andreo M. Harris, 24, South Bend, Indiana, pled guilty before Magistrate Judge Christopher Neuchterlein to count two of an indictment charging him with unlawful transport of a firearm. These charges were filed as the result of an investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Donald Schmid.

Michael S. Turner, 30, of South Bend, Indiana, was sentenced by Judge Jon DeGuilio to 33 months imprisonment and 4 years of supervised release after pleading guilty to count one of an information charging him with manufacture of marijuana. This case was the result of an investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Indiana State Police. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney William Grimmer.

Kristi Arnett-Higgins, 43, of Warsaw, Indiana, was sentenced by Judge Robert Miller, Jr. to 33 months imprisonment and 3 years of supervised release after pleading guilty to counts one through six of an indictment charging her with bank fraud, wire fraud, mail fraud, and making false statements to federal investigators. This case was the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Indiana State Police. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Donald Schmid.

Brendan M. Blue, 20, of Michigan City, Indiana, pled guilty before Magistrate Judge Christopher Neuchterlein to count one of an indictment charging him with unlawful transport of a firearm. These charges were filed as the result of an investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Frank Schaffer.

The specific sentence in each case to be imposed upon conviction will be determined by the judge after a consideration of federal sentencing statutes and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines.

Zhi Jian Jiang, 40, of Sacramento, California, was sentenced by Judge Robert Miller, Jr. to 36 months imprisonment, 2 years of supervised release, and a \$10,000 fine, after pleading guilty to counts one and six of an indictment charging him with concealing from detection illegal aliens and mail fraud. Jiang was the owner of the Fortune House restaurant located in Michigan City, Indiana. Jiang also owned a home where the illegal aliens were housed. As the employer, Jiang acknowledged that he was required to verify on an I-9 form (Employment Eligibility Verification Form) that an employee provided such documentation to establish the applicant's identity and authorization to work. Jiang admitted that he hired four (4) Mexican workers in reckless disregard of their alien status to work at the restaurant. He further acknowledged that he did not have the workers complete I-9 forms nor did he report their wages to the Indiana Work Force Development Agency. Jiang also admitted that he caused a quarterly report to be prepared and mailed to Indiana Work Force Development, Indianapolis, Indiana, for the third calendar quarter of 2006 that did not list the wages of the 4 alien workers. This report did not list the names and wages so as not to disclose to a government authority that the aliens worked at the restaurant. "Today's sentence should serve as a warning to employers who tolerate or perpetuate a shadow economy by hiring an illegal workforce," said Gary Hartwig, special agent in charge of the ICE Office of Homeland Security Investigations in Chicago. "We will use all our investigative tools to pursue employers who take advantage of illegal labor to make an unlawful profit."

This case was investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office of Homeland Security Investigations, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys John Maciejczyk and Barbara Brook.